

a butcher knife out of the drawer. "The pig's in the back yard," she said. "That's your job."

Clete took the knife from her and stepped out the sliding glass door: there was a fresh hole in the lawn the size of a burial plot, its bottom covered with steaming hot beach cobbles. The pig, a big mean looking fellow with little pink eyes, was huddled in the corner of the yard with his butt backed up against the fence. He snorted and pawed the ground when he saw Clete.

Clete stepped back inside and said, "Juanita, why don't we just get a nice canned ham; you know, stick it with some cloves, smear it with brown sugar and pineapple juice...."

Juanita halted her hula for a moment to glare at him. Clete said, "O.K. I'll go get Ellis to help me."

Juanita said, "Good idea," and resumed her dance.

Ellis, their next door neighbor, said, "You gotta hit him in the head with a hammer first, then you slit his throat." He went to his garage for his ball-peen, and they were off to kill a pig.

Clete steered the unsteady Ellis through the house, out to the back yard: the poor fellow had gotten a good look at Juanita's big white thighs as she hula-ed and her grass skirt lost its foliage. He was dazed. The pig took advantage of the situation by charging, knocking him ass over tea kettle before he could even get his hammer up. Then the beast spun around and went for his throat. Clete jumped on the pig's back, hooking his elbow under its chin to pull its head back. The pig bucked and spun, but Clete held on tight and laid his throat open with the knife.

The luau was on.

THE WEANING OF BABY ROY

Ellis picked up some liquid fertilizer at the hardware store and sprayed it on the front lawn. Almost overnight the bare brown grass blossomed into a lush, roof-high jungle that obscured the house from the street.

Ruth and Ellis' young son, Roy, who was just learning to crawl, pushed through the unlatched screen door and vanished in tangled foliage.

Ruth was panic stricken, making several safaris in search of the boy, hacking through the overgrowth with a large

kitchen knife, but she came up empty handed every time. After two weeks, she finally convinced Ellis to do something; he'd kept insisting that the boy would turn up sooner or later, as soon as he got hungry.

But his wife's arm twisting lit a fire under him. He drove out to the back roads behind the city and picked up several Mexican Nationals who were living in the hills, waiting for the strawberry harvest. He armed them with machetes and turned them loose on a jungle-clearing search for his boy.

They found him, fattened up on a diet of pill bugs, that he'd foraged on his own, and raw bunny parts, supplied to him by a litter of rogue, half-Chihuahua, half-Dachshund dogs who'd wandered into the territory and set up house.

Ruth cried with joy when she was reunited with her child, and she immediately tried to suckle him, but he refused her proffered breast; he wanted meat instead:

his carnivorous cravings had been awakened, and there was no turning back now.

THE REPERTOIRE EXPANDS

The Loma Alta Brass Band practiced in Clete and Juanita's living room, attempting to expand their repertoire. Last weekend they'd had a bad experience at the mall: a sales clerk from the Plump and Pretty Shop, irritated at hearing Cole Porter's "Anything Goes" for the fourth time in an hour, dragged Bob off the bandstand and slapped him silly. She'd singled him out because the chainsaw growl of his saxophone had felt like it was cutting through her skull. The other members of the band took her hint and packed their instruments up immediately.

So now the boys were trying out some new songs: Sonny Boy Williamson's "Eyesight to the Blind," for one.

The walls vibrated as Ellis huffed into his tuba; the windows shook with Butch's trombone wah-wahs. And Ginger, Clete's wife's little skinny-legged Chihuahua, ran yipping out the doggie door to the back yard as Clete toodled into the high-pitched, ear-stabbing melody on his clarinet.

Clete's wife Juanita tried hard to concentrate on her sewing in the back bedroom. She was working on a butterfly print muu muu, and even though she had her ears stuffed with cotton, she could still 'feel' the tuba. It shook her right down to the marrow of her bones, and rattled her